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## Principal's Newsletter

27 November 2020

Dear Parents,

They are back! Today, the second phase of the covid testing programme for the secondary phase is under way. This means about 750 pupils and staff will be tested again for the virus.

Frustration all around for Year 11 where a confirmed case meant two days of teams teaching before their return to school on Monday for their mocks. There is a palpable and observable change in the reaction to the announcement that pupils need to go home or self-isolate. Parents and pupils are truly fed up with the disruption to routines, social life and especially learning and exam preparation that are caused by the protocols which have been developed. We are determined to make this interruption as productive for pupils as we can. We are also certain that we will be able to ensure that our pupils are prepared and fairly assessed come the summer term. It really is a case of everyone pulling together to get through these difficulties.

Recently, I was introduced to a new word for these new times. *Phygital*. This is the so-called blended combination of the digital and physical which is a hallmark of our current predicament. People regularly ask me if anything good has come out of Covid school and I have to answer yes. We have learned a lot about how to structure Year 7 transition, how to teach pupils who need to be or are unavoidably absent, how to make the routines of our school better and how to effectively and very rapidly change and respond to new facts, new circumstances and new evidence. On balance however, the absence of physical freedom and for that matter physical teaching from time to time is nothing short of baneful fact to be coped with and overcome rather than celebrated. If there is anything we are learning during this time it is how important variety, face-to face interaction and support, and school community really are for the development of young people and the morale of teachers. There are things we will take forward from this period, but, in almost every respect, it will be a pleasure to look upon this experience in the rear-view mirror.

Our chapel is open again. Rather than bursting at the seams for collective worship and filled with exhaling youths belting out hymns in more or less musical fashion, chapel is now a recorded event attended by one bubble class. I must again commend the innovation of Mr Hammersley, Mr Bishop, Mr Harvey and of course the production company of Omar K and Luke P.

Every day is now a something awareness day and I often do not keep up with every one of these designations. I am very seriously interested however in educating our pupils further about Islamophobia during this, Islamophobia awareness month. The reason is that our pupils do sometimes experience Islamophobia in our school and in society. It is a scourge. I spoke about this issue a little bit in my whole school assembly today and Ms Diamond is working with a group of Muslim students to further this programme of education. It is striking how little many of our pupils know about Islam and the history of Islam. We do our best in the curriculum and in RS studies but there is still much work to be done to explain to all pupils what Islam is and is not.

Ms Shackell's forest school is exceedingly muddy. Wellies are required. This month has seen much learning and activity focused on our anti-bullying campaign which runs simultaneously to the 10 Downing Street version. The trees and groves of the forest school, a relatively recent addition, must be the most effective learning facility we have ever created for the least amount of money. I am looking forward to the grove's transformation into Santa's abode now that we are about to begin the advent season. The educational impulses and energies that Ms Shackell takes into the woods with her young charges are marvellous to behold.



Thanks to the recent House Art Festival in the primary phase, Tabitha C (Y1 Howard's) is looking forward to a free tour aboard Liverpool's Magical Mystery 'Rainbow' bus when lockdown is over! As her entry in the art competition, Tabitha made a replica of the bus and when family and friends shared pictures of her work, it was spotted by the tour company who issued the invitation – the only requirement is that she brings her bus on the tour as well. Well done Tabitha!

If your family is like mine, Christmas is a financial deficit month. But there is a consolation. You can sign up at [easyfundraising](#) (search for Liverpool College Parents Association), do your shopping online, and fill the coffers of the PTA simultaneously. In this way, the excellent PTA will be able to continue to fund the IT improvements and countless other

things which make our school special and fun, without any pain, financial or otherwise to you and your family.

LC Press, founded during a lockdown, continues to attract readers and produce interesting content. The latest [imagination in education podcast](#) is a discussion with Cllr Anna Rothery the first black Lord Mayor of Liverpool. LC Press has also published my second book: Full Life, Letters to My Students. The book consists of letters to students who have presented problems and questions to me over my 30 years in education. Upon reflection, I gave them incomplete or unhelpful advice most of the time, and the book seeks to set the record straight. You can download or buy it [here](#).

Mr Barnicoat has stormed ahead with his introduction of the GCSE Pod app which we have purchased to assist our pupils going forward in their revision for exams and the development of more and better skills. His excellent professional development training on the subject is yet another example of how the College has not slowed down or trimmed its desire to improve every aspect of the curriculum and teaching.

Soon we will be in Tier 2, LC Sports will reopen and so will Saturday sport be able to recommence. The brief time before the end of term will nevertheless mark an experience of a return to some semblance of normal Saturday morning.

Spare a thought for our sixth formers who are beginning to receive offers, and interviews for medicine and Oxbridge courses. These are now all conducted in a sort of super-secure zoom room. The intimidating but also thrilling experience of travelling to Cambridge or Oxford, sleeping in College, entering panelled rooms where academics try to find out if you know how to argue about the acceleration of a car from first principles, has been replaced with a flat screen on which appear the faces of interviewers. As I wrote above, the sooner this is in the rear-view mirror, the better.

Looking ahead, the term dates for 2021-22 academic year have been published on our website [here](#).

May I wish you and yours a pleasant and restful weekend.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Mr H van Mourik Broekman**  
**Principal**